

November 2016



Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

#### November Topics

- [Message From the State Executive Director](#)
- [FSA Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections](#)
- [USDA Expands Working-Lands Conservation Opportunities through CRP](#)
- [USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines](#)
- [Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline is Dec. 16](#)
- [Upcoming Acreage Reporting Dates](#)
- [Unauthorized Disposition of Grain](#)
- [Disaster Set-Aside \(DSA\) Program](#)
- [Farm Loan Graduation Reminder](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for November 2016](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

---

## Virginia FSA State Newsletter

---

### Virginia FSA State Office

**Jewel Hairston Bronaugh,  
Ph.D.  
State Executive Director**

1606 Santa Rosa Rd  
Suite 138  
Richmond, VA 23229

804-287-1503  
855-621-5866 fax

#### Hours

Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Message From the State Executive Director

Turkeys gobble up the limelight in the weeks before Thanksgiving dinner, but more than 300 Virginia farmers raise turkeys year-round. The Virginia poultry industry, which includes chicken and egg production, contributes more than \$13 billion to Virginia's economy and directly supports nearly 52,000 jobs in the state. It continues to be a busy time of year at the USDA Virginia Farm Service Agency. Here is the opportunity to remind you of some important updates and deadlines.

As you may be aware, many of the 1.7 million farms across the nation that enrolled in either the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs received safety net payments due to market turndowns during the 2015 crop year. The 2016 enrollment began on December 7 and continued to August 1, 2016. In 2016 Virginia County Offices enrolled 23,545 farms in

**State Office Staff**

Pete Adamson, Chief  
Farm Loans

Brent L. Whitlock, Chief  
Farm Programs

Connie Washburn-Marsh,  
Chief Administration Officer

Diane Lenoir-Giles  
Public Relations/Outreach  
Specialist

**Virginia FSA Internet**

More Information about  
Virginia FSA programs,  
activities and news can be  
found on the VA FSA Internet  
at

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/va>

To learn more about FSA  
programs you can also visit  
the National website at  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

ARC/PLC and increased participation by 0.77% over 2015. Virginia farmers received \$57 million in safety-net payments for the 2015 crop year. It is reassuring to know that programs like ARC and PLC are there to step in and provide some coverage for our farmers when they're hit by hard times.

FSA issued Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) annual rental payments to participants with active CRP contracts. Over 6,500 acres were reenrolled in CREP and 91.55 new acres were enrolled in CREP. Annually, we issue over \$3.35 million in payments to over 5,702 participants. In 2016, we issued over \$1,388,000 in cost share and other incentive payments to over 511 participants.

**Dates to remember:**

**November 1:** Final date to submit an application for payment for 2016 losses under [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program \(ELAP\)](#).

**November 1:** 2017 ARC and PLC Enrollment Begins.

**November 11:** Veterans Day Holiday. FSA offices are closed.

**November 15:** Deadline to report forage and grazed acreage for 2017

**November 20:** Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for fruit trees, bushes, strawberries, vines crops, pay administrative fee and buy up election. (Since the 20th falls on a weekend, applications will be accepted through Monday, Nov. 21, 2016).

**November 24:** Thanksgiving Day Holiday – USDA Offices Closed

**December 1:** Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for honey and maple sap, pay administrative fee and buy up election.

**Continuous:**

- Submit AD-1026 for forest land to be cleared for agricultural use and new ground (hay and pasture) to be planted to a row crop or vegetable.
- Submit CREP, Continuous CRP and Grassland CRP Enrollment Offers.
- NAP notices of losses must be reported to the County Office within 72 hours of the loss for hand harvested crops and a signed notice of loss must be filed with 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

---

## **FSA Urges Farmers and Ranchers to Vote in County Committee Elections**

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard by voting in the upcoming Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. Beginning Monday, Nov. 7, 2016, USDA will begin mailing ballots to eligible farmers and ranchers across the country. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by Dec. 5, 2016, to ensure that their vote is counted.

Nearly 7,700 FSA County Committee members serve FSA offices nationwide. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of county committee seats are up for election each year. County committee members apply their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, and emergency programs and eligibility.

Producers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program to be eligible to vote in the county committee election. Farmers and ranchers who supervise and conduct the farming operations of an entire farm, but are not of legal voting age, also may be eligible to vote.

Farmers and ranchers will begin receiving their ballots the week of Nov. 7. Ballots include the names of candidates running for the local committee election. FSA has modified the ballot, making it easily identifiable and less likely to be overlooked. Voters in local administrative area who do not receive ballots in the coming week can pick one up at their local FSA office. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than Dec. 5, 2016. Newly elected committee members will take office Jan. 1, 2017.

For more information, visit the FSA website at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections) or contact the local County FSA office.

---

## **USDA Expands Working-Lands Conservation Opportunities through CRP**

USDA will offer a new Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands practice specifically tailored for small-scale livestock grazing operations. Small livestock operations with 100 or fewer head of grazing dairy cows (or the equivalent) can submit applications to enroll up to 200 acres of grasslands per farm. USDA's goal is to enroll up to 200,000 acres.

The current CRP Grassland ranking period will end on Nov. 10, 2016. To date, the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has received nearly 5,000 offers covering over 1 million acres for this CRP working-lands conservation program. These offers are predominantly larger acreage ranchland in Western states.

The new practice for small-scale livestock grazers aims, in part, to encourage greater diversity geographically and in types of livestock operation. This opportunity will close on Dec. 16, 2016. Offers selected this fiscal year will be enrolled into CRP Grasslands beginning Oct. 1, 2017.

Participants in CRP Grasslands establish or maintain long-term, resource-conserving grasses and other plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. CRP Grasslands participants can use the land for livestock production (e.g. grazing or producing hay), while following their conservation and grazing plans in order to maintain the cover. A goal of CRP Grasslands is to minimize conversion of grasslands either to row crops or to non-agricultural uses. Participants can receive annual payments of up to 75 percent of the grazing value of the land and up to 50 percent to fund cover or practices like cross-fencing to support rotational grazing or improving pasture cover to benefit pollinators or other wildlife.

USDA will select offers for enrollment based on six ranking factors: (1) current and future use, (2) new farmer/rancher or underserved producer involvement, (3) maximum grassland preservation, (4) vegetative cover, (5) environmental factors and (6) pollinator habitat. Offers for the second ranking period also will be considered from producers who submitted offers for the first ranking period but were not accepted, as well as from new offers submitted through Dec. 16.

Small livestock operations or other farming and ranching operations interested in participating in CRP Grasslands should contact their local FSA office. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. To learn more about FSA's conservation programs, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation).

---

## **USDA Encourages Producers to Consider Risk Protection Coverage before Crop Sales Deadlines**

The Farm Service Agency encourages producers to examine available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the applicable crop sales deadline.

Producers are reminded that crops not covered by insurance may be eligible for NAP. The 2014 Farm Bill expanded NAP to include higher levels of protection. Beginning, underserved and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage, as well as discounted premiums for additional levels of protection."

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available, including perennial grass forage and grazing crops, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup, bioenergy, and industrial crops.

USDA has partnered with Michigan State University and the University of Illinois to create an online tool at [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) that allows producers to determine whether their crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP and to explore the best level of protection for their operation. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production, with higher levels of coverage, up to 65 percent of their expected production at 100 percent of the average market price, including coverage for organics and crops marketed directly to consumers.

Deadlines for coverage vary by state and crop. To learn more about NAP visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/nap](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/nap) or contact your local USDA Service Center. To find your local USDA Service Centers go to <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at USDA's online Agent Locator:

<http://prodwebnlb.rma.usda.gov/apps/AgentLocator/#>. Producers can use the USDA Cost Estimator, <https://ewebapp.rma.usda.gov/apps/costestimator/Default.aspx>, to predict insurance premium costs.

---

## Margin Protection Program for Dairy Enrollment Deadline is Dec. 16

The deadline for dairy producers to enroll in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy is Dec. 16, 2016. This voluntary dairy safety net program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, provides financial assistance to participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the producer. A USDA web tool, available at [www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool), allows dairy producers to calculate levels of coverage available from MPP based on price projections.

---

## Upcoming Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit their local County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following 2017 acreage reporting dates are applicable for all Counties in Virginia:

- November 15, 2016 hay, pasture, PRF and apiculture
- November 30, 2016 clams for RMA purposes
- January 2, 2017 honey colonies and maple tree for sap for NAP purposes
- January 15, 2017 apples, cherry, pears, peaches, grapes, bush crops (blueberry, blackberry, raspberries, and strawberries) canela, wheat, barley, oats, triticale, teff and rye

The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
- If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.
- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of “cover only,” “green manure,” “left standing,” or “seed,” then the acreage must be reported by July 15th. Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins. For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact your local County FSA office before the deadline.

---

## Unauthorized Disposition of Grain

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

---

## **Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) Program**

FSA borrowers with farms located in designated primary or contiguous disaster areas who are unable to make their scheduled FSA loan payments should consider the Disaster Set-Aside (DSA) program.

DSA is available to producers who suffered losses as a result of a natural disaster and is intended to relieve immediate and temporary financial stress. FSA is authorized to consider setting aside the portion of a payment/s needed for the operation to continue on a viable scale.

Borrowers must have at least two years left on the term of their loan in order to qualify.

Borrowers have eight months from the date of the disaster designation to submit a complete application. The application must include a written request for DSA signed by all parties liable for the debt along with production records and financial history for the operating year in which the disaster occurred. FSA may request additional information from the borrower in order to determine eligibility.

All farm loans must be current or less than 90 days past due at the time the DSA application is complete. Borrowers may not set aside more than one installment on each loan.

The amount set-aside, including interest accrued on the principal portion of the set-aside, is due on or before the final due date of the loan.

For more information, contact your local FSA farm loan office.

---

## **Farm Loan Graduation Reminder**

FSA Direct Loans are considered a temporary source of credit that is available to producers who do not meet normal underwriting criteria for commercial banks.

FSA periodically conducts Direct Loan graduation reviews to determine a borrower's ability to graduate to commercial credit. If the borrower's financial condition has improved to a point where they can refinance their debt with commercial credit, they will be asked to obtain other financing and partially or fully pay off their FSA debt.

By the end of a producer's operating cycle, the Agency will send a letter requesting a current balance sheet, actual financial performance and a projected farm budget. The borrower has 30 days to return the required financial documents. This information will be used to evaluate the borrower's potential for refinancing to commercial credit.

If a borrower meets local underwriting criteria, FSA will send the borrower's name, loan type, balance sheet and projected cash flow to commercial lenders. The borrower will be notified when loan information is sent to local lenders.

If any lenders are interested in refinancing the borrower's loan, FSA will send the borrower a letter with a list of lenders that are interested in refinancing the loan. The borrower must contact the lenders and complete an application for commercial credit within 30 calendar days.

If a commercial lender rejects the borrower, the borrower must obtain written evidence that specifies the reasons for rejection and submit to their local FSA farm loan office.

If a borrower fails to provide the requested financial information or to graduate, FSA will notify the borrower of noncompliance, FSA's intent to accelerate the loan, and appeal rights.

---

## **Selected Interest Rates for November 2016**

90-Day Treasury Bill - .6275%

Farm Operating Loans — Direct - 2.125%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct - 3.25%

Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher - 1.50%

Emergency Loans - Amount of Actual Loss - 3.125%

Emergency Loans - Annual Production - 4.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (3 years) - 1.000%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (5 years) - 1.250%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years) - 1.500%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years) - 1.750%

Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years) - 1.750%

Commodity Loans 1996-Present - 1.625%

---

## **Dates to Remember**

Nov. 11:

Federal Holiday – USDA Offices Closed

Nov. 15:

Deadline to report forage and grazed acreage for 2017

Nov. 20:

Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for fruit trees, bushes, strawberries, vines crops, pay administrative fee and buy up election.

Nov. 24:

Federal Holiday – USDA Offices Closed

Dec. 1:

Deadline to file 2017 NAP Application for Coverage for honey and maple sap, pay administrative fee and buy up election.

Dec. 5:

Deadline to return County Committee LAA election ballots.

Dec. 16:

2017 MPP election deadline.

Continuous:

Submit AD-1026 for forest land to be cleared for agricultural use and new ground (hay and pasture) to be planted to a row crop or vegetable.

Continuous:

Submit CREP, Continuous CRP and Grassland CRP Enrollment Offers.

Continuous:

NAP notices of losses must be reported to the County Office within 72 hours of the loss for hand harvested crops and a signed notice of loss must be filed with 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent.

Continuous:

Timely report changes in your farming operation to the County Office in writing and update your CCC-902 Farm Operating Plan.

Continuous:

Need on farm grain, hay or cold storage consider FSFL contact, contact your local FSA Office for more details.

---

For more information on bulletin subjects or details regarding your GovDelivery subscription with the Virginia FSA State Office, contact Diane Lenoir-Giles at [diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov](mailto:diane.lenoir-giles@va.usda.gov) or call at 804-287-1537.

---

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).